Transcription: Grand Canyon Oral History
Interviewee: Winslow Burleson (WB)
Interviewers: Tom Martin (TM) and Hazel Clark (HC)
Subject: Solo river trip
Date of Interview: 01/07/2018
Method of Interview: In person
Transcriber: David Lea
Date of Transcription: 09/04/2018
Transcription Reviewers: Tom Martin
Keys: River Trip, Kayaking, Gliding

TM: Today is December – sorry - today is January 7th. It's 2018. We have just picked up Winslow Burleson at Pearce Ferry. Winslow has just completed a two-week Grand Canyon trip.

HC: Three week.

TM: He has put in, his put in date was the 18th of 2017. Hazel Clark and I'm Tom Martin, are the interviewers and Winslow, how was your trip?

WB: It was great.

TM: Tell me all about it.

WB: [laughing] Let's see. One of the amazing things about this trip was having done the similar trip two years earlier, it was this mixture of memories from the previous trip and strategies and figuring out what you want to do this trip. And what you've done last trip. So, getting down to the bridge and looking up at the condors and thinking about where the first night is. Similar on both trips. And just really needed a day or two of decompression as soon as I got on the water. So, got to Soap or forget where the first campsite this trip was, but just slept most of the second day [laughs]. I just needed a lot of time between getting off from work, getting through the logistics of getting the trip ready, then also a little bit of on-the-water logistics just getting some of the food sorted out, and find all the equipment, stuff getting it ready. Just take that time, take it at an easy pace. You got time. You might as well use it.

TM: And you had done that the trip before, the first day was launch day and the second day was sort of your first layover, if you will.

WB: Well the first trip in January of 2016, two years ago, it was snowing the day I launched and it was raining the second day and I hadn't figured out much of my food. I had all my food with me but I didn't understand its portions or allocation, so I split it up into three [inaudible]. I took a video of me counting out cliff bars…You know, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven in this bin, seven in that bin, eight in this bin and sorting it all through. This trip it was much nicer weather starting off. It was still cold the first couple days. I didn't have quite as warm of sleeping bag this time so that was a factor. I don't know what exactly was going on with the air bladder in the bottom of my ducky but there was a little concern that it might be leaking so I was pumping it up a little bit the first couple days. And then it stayed solid the rest

of the trip. I didn't want to take it apart and repair it, first go, because that would take a lot of effort, be challenging. So I didn't need to do that and it turned out fine.

TM: So, I forgot to mention you're all by yourself and your boat is an inflatable kayak. How long is that boat?

WB: Um, I don't know. I think it's fourteen, sixteen, fourteen feet. It's an Airelynx 2, so it carries…

TM: It's a two passenger boat?

WB: Yeah it's a two passenger boat. I have it rigged with the back seat, sorry the front seat turned backwards I think, so that I'm paddling it as a solo.

TM: And Airelynx, that is A-I-R-E-L-Y-N-X? Is that it?

WB: Yeah I believe so.

TM: Okay. So it's a small inflatable kayak. How many gear bags did you have tied into this thing?

WB: I had I think, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Five gear bags, and then a mesh bag and a day bag. Pretty much, yeah. When I was buying the boat before the first trip I had – actually – six months before the first trip I'd gone on a group trip with three rafts, three eighteen feet, rented out. We pulled up to Diamond Creek and a couple minutes after we got there an engineer from Sacramento pulled up in an Airelinks 1. He had his poop tubes hanging out the back with the little screw caps, all the rest of the logistics, pretty much the same rig as I have now in a slightly smaller boat. He had started his trip with two people and his buddy had a shoulder…strained his shoulder on the trip and decided to hike out. So he ended the trip single. That gave me a lot of inspiration and motivation to figure out how to do it solo. Then I read Bruce Klein's book, "Never Boat Alone," asterisk, unless you've read this book about solo trips in the Grand Canyon. And then I saw Bruce Klein on the first trip two years ago on my first solo trip which was great. He was riding an Aire Cat. So he had also known the president of Aire and…had taken a picture of our two boats together, two solos meeting up in the canyon and sent it off to his friend. So that was a fun little meet-up. Saw him for about 20 or 30 minutes, I think it was at Bass. That was another fun thing about his trip. Since I didn't know all the campsites the first trip, it was fun to sort of remember and see and get a better orientation to some of the different canyons and features. Obviously there's so many it's…it would take a lifetime to learn them all. But it was fun to experience that.

TM: Did you stay at the same camps that you had stayed at in 2016.

WB: This trip I stayed much more on smaller sandbars and the smaller the site the better. There were less rodents. I would get these little mice that would run up and down over the mesh tent that I had because I was camping backpack-style, so I would crawl in my sleeping bag and set my camp stove outside my tent in my turkey pans. The first year I had all the gear for having winter fires. I had made this turkey pan based fire pit that was the right size and shape and engineered that out and had the Kevlar blanket. Never ended up making any fires 'cause I realized that I'd have to carry all the charcoal out and didn't want to do that either. Between candles and the camp stove there's enough yellow flame to enjoy the sentiments of fire. This time I used many fewer candles because the first time I was finding myself getting sleepy reading by candle-light and I thought that was a little dangerous. So I brought more batteries and had the headlamp going. Did a lot of reading in red-light just to keep my eyes adjusted so I could look out and see the shooting stars at periods between chapters. I enjoyed the

sandbars because, you know, the smaller the camp the less likely there would be mice or ants and I was able to set up those, you know find them, plus they were there much more often when you needed them. So you didn't have to wait and look as long as you…sometimes I would go pretty late in the day. I'd go from you know start to be 5 o'oclock, 515, 530, 545, it's getting pretty dark, you know six is *pretty* dark. So you don't really want to be, it would be difficult to find a sand bank at six. So if you're starting at 515 and looking in an area where there are not too many… I also got to some of the washes that were labeled as campsites and wasn't so convinced that they were. I didn't find things that I liked at some of the smaller main camps, so I'd go on and find a sand bank. I found a really nice one, think it was around Ledges, maybe a couple of miles after, and it was up under a little overhang and I went all the way up, pulled the boat up the bank a little, got up there. It was just big enough for one or *maybe* two tents. But one tent perfect. Got right in under that little ledge. It was funny the crows still found me [laughing], the ravens. One of the thing Bruce said in his book was that the Park Service assigns two deputized ravens to every boat trip. So these ravens, they're spies that are looking out for solo boaters throughout their navigation of the canyon.

TM: Did they steal anything from you?

WB: The first trip I had ravens because I was keeping my garbage in my mesh bag. So the ravens ended up poking a nice big whole in my mesh bag and getting messy stuff there. This trip I did pretty well. I didn't do that and other than inside, I used peanut butter jars so they were probably cleaner and more sealed, so they didn't have as big of impact or an issue with the ravens there. So that worked out pretty well.

TM: Okay so day 2 you just hung out and slept and then headed on to Marvel Gorge, went through the roaring 20s.

WB: mmm mmm

TM: Did you swim any in there at all?

WB: I think so [contemplating]. This trip I was much less worried about swimming and much more confident. In the last trip I had swum a lot. But since this was my first solo and my first time in the ducky on rapids, in the Roaring 20s I was worried about swimming 'cause I hadn't swum on the water yet. I was very safety conscious, ensuring that everything was properly established in my fanny pack which I kept on my person all the time, including my satellite beacon, beeper….But this trip I had that routine down pretty well and I was much more confident with being able to just swim, flip over any time. One of the things that you and I did at the beginning of the first trip was to test my roll, test the integrity of all the straps and everything with a fully loaded kayak, ensure I knew how to flip it back over. I did that again at the beginning of this trip and was good to go. So another big thing about this trip was, having seen a lot of these rapids two times in the last two and a half years, one on the oars and one on the solo, I was more confident with being able to run them and did less scouting. I was able to see what I needed to from the vantage point of the ducky. The ducky is a lot faster and lighter than a larger boat and if it says "be one boat length away from the right wall or from the big hole," you know in a ducky you have 10 feet, 16 feet because one boat width of an 18ft raft is 10 ft. So you can fit five or six duckies in there. So there's a lot more…what's the word?

TM: Room?

WB: Yeah a lot more room, but a lot more forgiveness, or latitude in terms of how you're doing things. What I experienced was that, I was feeling like I was getting the lines set up and able to do the runs I wanted to, but there'd be a randomness in terms of the size of a lateral or not necessarily a hole but, just the way a standing wave would set up on you, was such that if it crashed at the right time it would swamp you and flip you. And you're not in a boat that can roll, so you're going to swim. If you stop and scout, you're still going to be in that same spot with that wave. There's not a way to do the timing there. The timing is there in the force that you're applying and the energy that you're putting in in the wave trough right before that wave. So you're doing your best in that moment, but it's not something that you can anticipate from the scouting perspective. So I was doing a lot more of "read and run" and feeling good. I ended up swimming in Crystal and Lava. Last time I was so excited about Lava, my solo success in Lava, I hit the V-wave, got flipped around in the second wave, made it past the cheese grater, and stayed afloat and cheered. That was a real thrill. This time I scouted and set up…It was interesting, I was a little intimidated the first trip. I had scouted and worked up in my mind you know, psychologically. We had flipped in one of…One of the raft trips had flipped in the first trip on the oars in the summer, so there's a little bit of intimidation, the power of the rapid there. And then I had been swept out of the boat just around the cheese grater in Lava. Somebody jumped on the oars there and pulled me back into the raft. So now my first solo trip I was up on the ridge, you know there wasn't anyone around, and it was time to do the rapids, so I said, "okay, I'm going to go do this," and so there was that sort of trepidation or excitement and I hit the bubble-line and made it through as I described. I was excited. This trip I was more confident with the swimming and more confident with the safety factors in terms of having everything that I needed and knowing what to do. And with swimming, actually. So I swum more this trip and a little higher in some of the rapids and so I went saying, "if I swim, I swim." You know people have swum this and that'll be okay too. And there was a lot more sort of acceptance, that was both happening on the water but also just in general. Do what you want to do and enjoy it the way you want to enjoy it and things will be fine either way.

TM: And you're wearing a dry suit, is that right?

WB: Yes. So I had, I forget the name Katoca?

TM: Kokatat?

WB: Kokatat. Dry suit. It's pretty nice

TM: It's K-O-K-A-T-A-T, Kokatat.

WB: Kokatat. So I had the dry suit. I had the neoprene canyoneering booties. I think those might also be by that company. The suit I had had a hood, an external hood. It's not dry, kind of like a parka. I didn't end up using that this trip but it was nice to have the first trip. Yeah it's a pretty nice suit, it has the race zipper, the relief zipper and then the main zipper. So I'm wearing the dry suit, I'm wearing the life jacket. I have two really nice high volume life jackets with the head supports, so if you're unconscious they're trying to flip you over and hold your head above water. Those are there, they're bright orange. Had a red helmet. NRS helmet. Wore the helmet on all the big rapids and then also just on some of the other days. Also, nice little neoprene beanie with a sun visor. So that sits under the helmet and that's good. I didn't actually use any, I think I only used sunscreen like one day. But pretty much everything else I was using the beanie and a large sun hat. Sometimes I'd put the hat over my helmet, even, because I'd want the safety of the helmet. But I wouldn't do that in a rapid, but in the long interludes between the rapids

I'd use the sun shelter there. But then going back to Lava for a second, I was wearing the life jacket, I was wearing the dry suit, get back in the boat, have everything nicely strapped down and I hit the bubble-line, first V-wave very nicely as I just described, hit the second wave at a time where it just swamped me, crunched me, turned the boat, and I was over and underwater for a little bit. Since I'm wearing the buoyant life jacket I was able to come back up. I was underwater for a couple seconds, you know a little longer than I wanted to be, but nothing that was scary. And came up, I always hold my paddle, but I was a few feet away from the boat and that's about as far away as I ever got from the boat. So I paddled and swam over to the boat, grabbed it, and was able to get back in it. Went through the big wave trains, stayed there for a little while. When you're with the boat and its heavy, you can't really re-flip it over in the wave train. You know you can, but it's jostling around a lot and it can pull on your shoulder or it can be hard to get up on to, 'cause you stick your knee up on the lower…I mean it's upside down, and there's these hand-holds, so you grab one of the hand-holds, stick your knee up to your chest and use that to flip it back over and now you're back in the water cause it's flipped over and you have to do a secondary move to thrust yourself back into the boat. It's easier to do all that once all the waves have subsided a little bit, but in both Crystal and Lava I was able to do that before the second half of the rapids. So getting to the left of the cobble bar, getting into it before Lower Lava. The water was lower this year. We had talked a little bit about the bedrock and the left run, and it looked so low that it was enticing, but you're solo and don't want to do something foolish so I was cautious and took the right run. But it was low enough that I was able to see much more of what was going on around the back I didn't eddy out at all, didn't check it out. I could see that it was really messy and definitely not recommended. Probably not even something you'd even want to do if you were in a ducky in a group, you know definitely not solo. Those are the kind of thoughts, explorations…we interviewed on the way up here and you were asking me about the relationship between solo gliding and solo kayaking cause I'd done a student pilots license and got into the solo, and that's the kind of thing where in the gliding I was on my first solo and said, "maybe oh I'll do a little circle here to work off some altitude" and thought very quickly that no I should do exactly what I've been taught to do and get down safely on my first solo. And that's the same kind of reasoning that is brought to the kind of decision I just described in sticking with the plan of the right side of Bedrock.

TM: Did you interface with other trips, I know that there was another trip launched a day ahead of you, and actually they were leaving when you were at the ramp and you had a chance to go talk to them and tell them that you were coming in behind them…when did you first see people on the water?

WB: Yeah, so this trip I saw many…five or six other trips. There's two or three kayak trips, some with sea kayaks, some with…another group with river kayaks. There were two raft trips. So at least four trips. And there was the group you just described, some of them were from Colorado. I think others maybe Arizona. They had what? Five people, four people? Two single rafts and a couple. I think a total of four people. I was at Bass and I saw their rafts at Bass Camp. I decided that I wanted to hike up to the camp because I hadn't been up there yet. I decided that I would stay at the Upper Bass Camp, the little pre-Bass spot. I didn't really want to see anybody at that time in the trip. I wanted to…and I'd also decided that even at Phantom, unlike my first trip where I'd stopped and had dinner and breakfast, I also wanted to not see people or not interact with people. I just wanted to have kind of quiet and time and space, solo for that duration. I had really enjoyed the last ten days of my first trip where I hadn't seen anybody for that entire time. One of the things about the space out there is that you're on the river, there's always a chance that somebody might come around, you know, you're showering and "oh maybe

somebody's gonna come," there's always a little bit of anticipation, but for the most part you're very alone. You know that there's the safety factor if you, if something, if you lose your boat or if you need to get some help you can hang out for a day or two and likely there'll be somebody that shows up for a little while. But the first time I saw people on this trip was at the Bass, but I avoided them there. I took an alternate route back to the Bass camp, but I ended up seeing them on the trail anyway, so I spent about ten, fifteen minutes talking to them at that point. Then, even at Phantom, prior to that, I'd seen a bunch of people but stayed far left and not really interacting with anybody on the river beach through the upper bridge, but then there was a couple walking across the lower bridge and it was kind of two obvious, they were right above me, I waved to them. So that was pretty much, those two were the first interactions with other people throughout that experience. And then [thinking] I did see different groups, maybe at Christmas Tree Cave…but I'd continue past. It was an interesting psychological thing. Somebody in Christmas Tree camp saw me with a solo and said "aww that's badass" and that, even just a comment like that, because that was the first comment in…other than that first ten minutes of talking to somebody, you know it filters with you the rest of the day. Day, day and a half. It's there with you every hour or two or something. So it's an interesting feedback loop in terms of how these things affect you. A little bit later down around mile 209/210, it was the first day that the river got more silty and I had been filling from the river to treat the water and use it, so I ended up deciding that if I saw a group I would stop and ask for some water, just so I had enough and didn't have to spend the extra time to get ready at camp and stuff. At that point I found a group of, I think, six. They had three rafts, three couples, and a friend. So seven people from the northwest territories above the arctic circle. They were there for…they were taking out at Diamond Creek. So it was the end of their trip and getting close to the end of my trip. I spent about an hour and a half with them, had a couple liters of water, and a beer and enjoyed the three o'clock to four thirty. I got back on the water at four thirty and paddled on for another hour and a half almost to six. Found a little site and so those were my major experiences with people. There were a couple people over at the helicopter landing sites in the lower post-Diamond Creek takeout. It was interesting because I didn't see anybody, but I heard some voices. I didn't expect to see…to hear any voices. I expected to hear helicopters and I hadn't heard any helicopters. So I just heard these voices all of a sudden. I saw some shadows because it was later in the day up on the ridge. Two or three of them were moving and two or three were weren't. So I figured out that there was at least two people up there and they were the ones that I'd heard then I realized a third person who hadn't been moving started to move. There was an umbrella and then there was the tailfins of a helicopter and so I was like "oh that is the helicopter and that's why they're there." You know, I waved at them a couple times. Shortly thereafter there was what you describe in your river guide the Ride of the Valkyries, there was a series of eight or ten of these little helicopters coming in all low flying. I didn't know that they were allowed to fly that low and they were coming in right over me. Turned out they were landing river left just beyond where I was. Just one after the other every minute or two and that was quite an experience.

TM: What are your thoughts about the helicopter development in the Western Grand Canyon?

WB: [long pause] I guess I would say I don't know a lot about the history of the development or the number. I just had that experience that I just described. I know in Manhattan shortly after my first trip there was an article in the New York Times around the impact of the noise on the city of the amount of helicopter activity. In particular relative to the number of people that benefit from it. So, there's a very small number of tourists, individuals who are getting short, brief experiences in these machines and

then there's a huge impact on the rest of the environment or on the people. So I think there needs to be consideration about the intensity of these things. One of the things that is also, from an ecological and environmental perspective, even an individual out in these environments is having a big impact, alone, without a machine. Just being there, starting a fire, creating a smell of the food you've cooked, sometimes the more remote and even solo individuals are going a little further than others, so they're impacting areas that are not as often visited. There's arguments across the spectrum of what level of impact these different activities have. Obviously helicopters have a much higher impact than planes. They're louder. They're landing in the canyon. They're getting all the way down close to river level. So unlike being up in the sky and flying over, you're really getting a lot more from these machines. In my experience here was that they were going all the way till, until after it was sunset. It was a cloudy, cold day and it was 5:30/6:00 pm before they were stopping and then 7:35 this morning, first one flew threw and was there again. Since then, every fifteen minutes or so there was another helicopter in the entire region from 260 to 280, so you're talking about a huge area and a very intense amount of activity. You know it's not isolated to a certain time of day or a certain number of flights, or it doesn't appear to be at least, so.

TM: What would you do differently on your next trip?

WB: Hmmm. Yeah, I mean I think each time, we'll see. The first time, I got off the first solo trip and you know, wanted to have more climbing experience and more hiking fitness and you know, started to explore some of those in the two years between the trips. This time I had a little bit of a heel spur that prevented me from extended back-country hiking. So I think one of the things would be to spend more of the time, more of the layovers and…it's the same answer for both trips. More hiking more of the side canyons. The first trip, one of the things I wanted to do differently was the food I had picked up a couple of meals that were ready to eat and hadn't pre-tested them. So I had a lot of these kind of spicy, not freeze dried, but essentially dry packed grocery store foods, and hadn't eaten them before so they were not to my liking and I had too many of them. So that was a little onerous. This time I did better on the food, but I did a lot more cliff bars and skipped lunches in favor of just sort of on the water eating and nibbling. You could have snack packs or cliff bars, just different ways to do that. That meant that I just had breakfast and dinner. There was still some fine-tuning that I would do there. I still haven't done much artwork on another trip. I did a lot more journaling this trip which was very reflective. I did a lot of reading the first trip, I did a lot of reading on philosophy. It was kind of the meta, general understanding of our place in the world and our way of being in the world. This trip I would say it was more applied philosophy, so it was more about your experience…I read a book called *Small is Beautiful*: *Economics as if Humans Matter* so that was an interesting perspective in the 70s about the population impact and the energy impact of fossil fuels that we were having on the world as a civilization and really that had only occurred over the previous 3-5 decades, and so there was this huge ramping up of the impact of the industrial revolution and unclear how that could be sustained over the next fifty years. Which brings us to today, essentially, in 2020 or 2018 and so it was interesting to see the kind of historical perspective of where some of those concerns are valid or where they aren't and what some of our continuing impact is. Also read *Siddhartha* on both trips which is a great book about sort of personal, meditative philosophy and it has a lot to do with rivers in terms of gaining wisdom and experience from reflecting on nature and the role of the river. So that was another wonderful experience. Going into this one I brought out some poetry and music theory and I read most of the poetry in the context of what I'd just talked about in terms of place in the world and perspective on nature and meaning and experience. So

those were very meaningful. And I did a lot of journaling but I think I'd like to do a little more artistic, creative generation. So, in terms of either building up some skills to either write some music or doing more painting. One thing I did do this trip, I did this fall take a couple…join a couple choirs at NYU, New York University. So I was bringing to the canyon a little bit of voice experience and was able to explore some of that in the canyon. So in terms of the music theory and poetry and what little pieces of songs that I remembered, I was able to explore both my voice, but also my voice in the context of nature and the echo chambers and some of the spaces. So I think one answer to your question is how over the next whatever timeframe I may mature, develop some of those skills even further and appreciate them. I was paying a lot of attention to sounds in the canyon and listening to some of the birds. I had a nice little interactive whistling experience with a couple of the different birds along the shore and those were magical. Just in terms of nature. I saw some, quite a few condors throughout the canyon. They were very high up, soaring and I enjoyed experiencing their flight. When I had been flying, we had circled with six or seven hawks in Vermont, so having that personal experience of being up there in the thermals, I brought to the canyon and appreciated seeing that here in the canyon in terms of the condors. Appreciating some of that soaring experience vicariously through these very massive, large wing spanned birds.

TM: What worked for you that you would do again?

WB: For me, I found that doing longer days and then having days off and interspersing was something I needed just in terms of the energy it took one day to get up and out and packed and ready and on the water, it was worth spending… you know if it was three o'clock, to me it was worth another one, two, two and a half, maybe even three hours on the water get in another five/ten miles and then have a full day off. I spent a lot of that time reading and I was balancing the experience on the water and the moving forward in the trip with my interests in some of the different books that I had brought and what I would be learning from those and how I would reflect with that knowledge and experience while I was on the water. So there was this balance between reading one day and being on the water one day and reading and being on the water and integrating those two pieces was helpful and important to me. There would kind of be a saturation of one and then the other. So I'd overdose on maybe a little too much reading or relaxing or laying in the tent too long and then the intensity of being on the water and that full day of activity. So that worked both intellectually or spiritually, but then also physically, giving my shoulder a chance to rest. I had a little bit of fatigue in my shoulder one or twice or a couple days throughout the trip so I'd want to take a day off just to pace it. So that was a piece of things as well. So just being okay with that and understanding that that's what I needed. Other things that worked, the food preparation, just having those pans, the non-sandy spot where you can cook. The logistics…I was just very familiar with being able to put on the dry suit, get everything packed and ready. It still takes forever. I would get up at 645, 7, 730, 8, whatever time you wake up, usually between 630 and 730 and I wouldn't get on the water until 930 or 10 or sometimes even 1030 in terms of breakfast, using the bathroom, getting everything into the bags, packed, strapped, getting the cliff bars into the pack, reading the rapids so that I would know what was coming up, reading the possible sites that I would potentially want to hike or camp at so I knew what some of the options were. So all of that was stuff that you're either doing on your down day or you're doing that morning. And then sometimes that's a little overwhelming so you're like "oh I'll just read another chapter of something relaxing," so that adds another half hour to the prep time. Then you still get on the water and go for a while. I think another, just being quiet and silent and floating, sometimes not paddling or just minimally paddling was another

significant experience just being able to float there and try to be meditative or as present as possible with the different parts of the canyon. Thinking of well this is the river, but the canyon is the river. Where does the river stop? Does it…are the clouds part of the river, are the rocks part of the river? When are they part of the river, when are they not part of the river? And just embracing kind of the spectrum or wholeness of that experience. That it's all part of the same thing and that you're present at that time.

TM: Would you do it again?

WB: Yeah. I think what I learned the first trip, I mean I'll be interested to see this trip, but on the first trip there was a major feeling of accomplishment and a stretch of this wasn't something I was sure about. That I was stretching in terms of this was a solo trip, I've never been alone that long. This trip was a repetition and I think that allowed me to go deeper into some of the journaling and the perspective and be a little bit more relaxed about the trip and a little more confident in the trip. You know a little bit more attention to some of the more personal experiences in terms of the singing or the interaction with nature. I think for me, I'm finding out that that's a very healthy and necessary experiences. There's a huge juxtaposition between the number of people that you see in a 20 day period in the Grand Canyon and the number of people you see in a twenty minute period in Manhattan. That I think is part of the need to come out here and be alone and reflect. I think another piece of it was it was interesting to see the sort of waves of experience temporally this trip. You go a few days and say "okay I'm starting to relax or reflect or I need that first day of sleep and just get resituated." After five, six days you're thinking less about the past, about what you brought with you, and more about where you are and where you're going. But it's all there and it's all feeding back. So there's this mix of what's it going to be like when I'm done and is it going to be done, how much longer is it going to be, being on a solo trip you haven't seen anybody. So there's moments where you're anticipating or needing or wanting to be back with friends or in day-to-day experience. But those are short-lived relative to the experience of being out there and things that you wanna focus on becoming…I guess what I was surprised by this trip, was how every couple days I would gain new insights on new topics. Sometimes it would be about the kinds of work that I want to be doing or sometimes it would be the kinds of adventures I want to be taking or the kinds of friendships that I want to be developing. I would think that I'd covered a lot of it after the first ten days, I'd say you know "I still have ten days, oh my gosh." But after twelve days you're like "oh wow those two days were really valuable." You know then after 17 days you still have 4 days left. Three, four day….Oh gosh this is still happening, still here. But at the same time there's things that you're writing or coming up with that are valuable and insightful and feel like I will take forward in terms of how I will think about what I want to do over the next six months to a year. So I don't know. Obviously if I was on the water for another week it would probably still happen. We'll see how…I guess part of that question is how long do these things need to be and how often do they need to be. I think that's a big part of your question. And then how do you integrate them better. How do you understand more about how your everyday life encompasses enough of what you need.

TM: What are you going to take back to the classroom from this trip?

WB: Oh yeah yeah. So many different things. I do a lot of creative work, a lot of invention and design. A lot of the time out there you're thinking about different things that are, could be done better. You know simple things like maybe instead of putting the two iodine tablets and then the next iodine tablet in. Could it all just be in a gel capsule and you drop it in once? Also the need to relieve yourself frequently.

Is there a catheter, or some other type…so I work in nursing, are there technologies where you could have a catheter tube that might be more comfortable on insertion or be less painful as it comes out or is that the kind of technology that can be used outside of a medical context, in an adventure context, in an underwater habitat or in a dry suit. Other thoughts are how that place, how can the canyon and the national parks in some of these place *be* classrooms themselves? And in what contexts and in what structures can that happen? So taking things back to the classroom is one direction and you know a very simple, literal version of that is I've been looking at how to get enough people to enroll in my classes in the spring and there's scheduling issues. But there's this experience that "oh well, if I hold classes on Saturday, there's much more possibility of having more people take these classes." So going into the canyon I hadn't thought that that was something I wanted to do, but as I was in the canyon, I saw there was some structures about how that could happen. Three, four, five day, five Saturdays across a semester for longer workshops could work really well. So you know there's this back and flow of the kind of literal specific to the design engineering to even the topics that you wanna do classes on. Do you want to do citizen science and adventure ecology or leadership and teamwork? How many different kinds of classes can you teach in a month on a month-long canyon trip? So a lot of different perspectives on education and experience.

TM: What else would you like to add that we haven't covered yet?

WB: Umm. I just think two things. I think I said something similar at the end of the first solo. One is that when you have a goal or ambition or objective like this, it's very impressive and gratifying that the various people that make it possible with you are able to do that. And that couples to the second thing which is the encouragement to anybody to do this if you have an aspiration or objective to get on the water, to hike down to the river, to get off the rim, even just a few minutes down a trail is much more impactful than staying at the lodge. The importance of going beyond your own ability and doing it to fulfil your aspirations and goals. There's two parts, one that knowing that's an important part of life, being able to stress yourself and build those new experience and then there's a community and people willing and ready to help you make that possible are the two parts that I think echos, resonates as I come off all the different trips I've been on, these last two solo trips in the canyon…

TM: I would think that is as good today as it would be fifty years from now, get out there and do it.

WB: Thanks.

TM: Well, this would then complete Part II of an interview with Winslow Burleson at the takeout on the drive back to civilization here on the 7th of January 2018. Thank you very much.